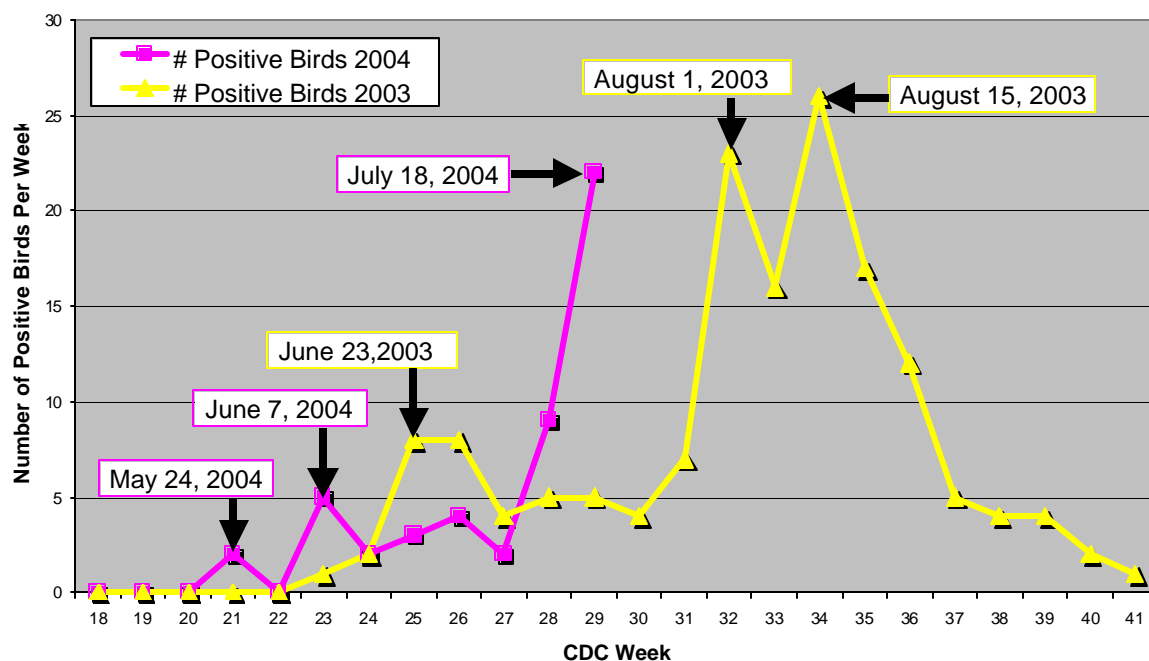


Comparison of West Nile Virus Positive Dead Birds Missouri -- 2003 and 2004 (To Date)



West Nile Virus Positive Dead Bird Trends Substantially Different in 2004

The Vector-borne Disease Program is encouraging LPHAs to continue to submit dead birds for West Nile virus (WNV) testing. As of August 3, 2004, 244 dead birds have been analyzed at the Missouri Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Fifty-seven of these birds, submitted by 29 different health departments in Missouri, have been found to be positive for WNV. In 2003, a total of 309 dead birds were tested, just under half of these – 154 – being found to have been infected with the virus.

The chart above compares the number of West Nile virus (WNV) positive dead birds between 2003 and 2004 through the end of the week of July 18, 2004 (CDC week 29). It is clear that dead birds infected with WNV appeared earlier in 2004 than in 2003 (CDC week 21 in 2004 and Week 23 in 2003). In addition, magnitude of WNV positive dead birds this year is running about three weeks ahead of the rate in 2003.

Missouri's first WNV human case, an 8-year-old child from St. Charles County, was likely infected in Arizona where he'd been vacationing the week before he became ill. The first two human cases in the state in 2003 that were definitely infected in Missouri had a likely onset date of August 11, 2003 and were identified by the State Public Health Laboratory eleven days later. It is too early to say whether Missouri's human cases will occur earlier in 2004. As of August 4, 2004, several suspect cases are under investigation, all of these with mid to late July possible onset dates.

This dead bird detection is one more reason people should take precautions against mosquito bites this summer. DHSS advises people to wear long sleeves and pants if possible, use insect repellent with DEET, be aware of heightened mosquito activity at dusk and dawn, remove standing water near your house, and make sure screens on windows and doors fit properly.